Chapter 6:
Clan Annihilation

第六話

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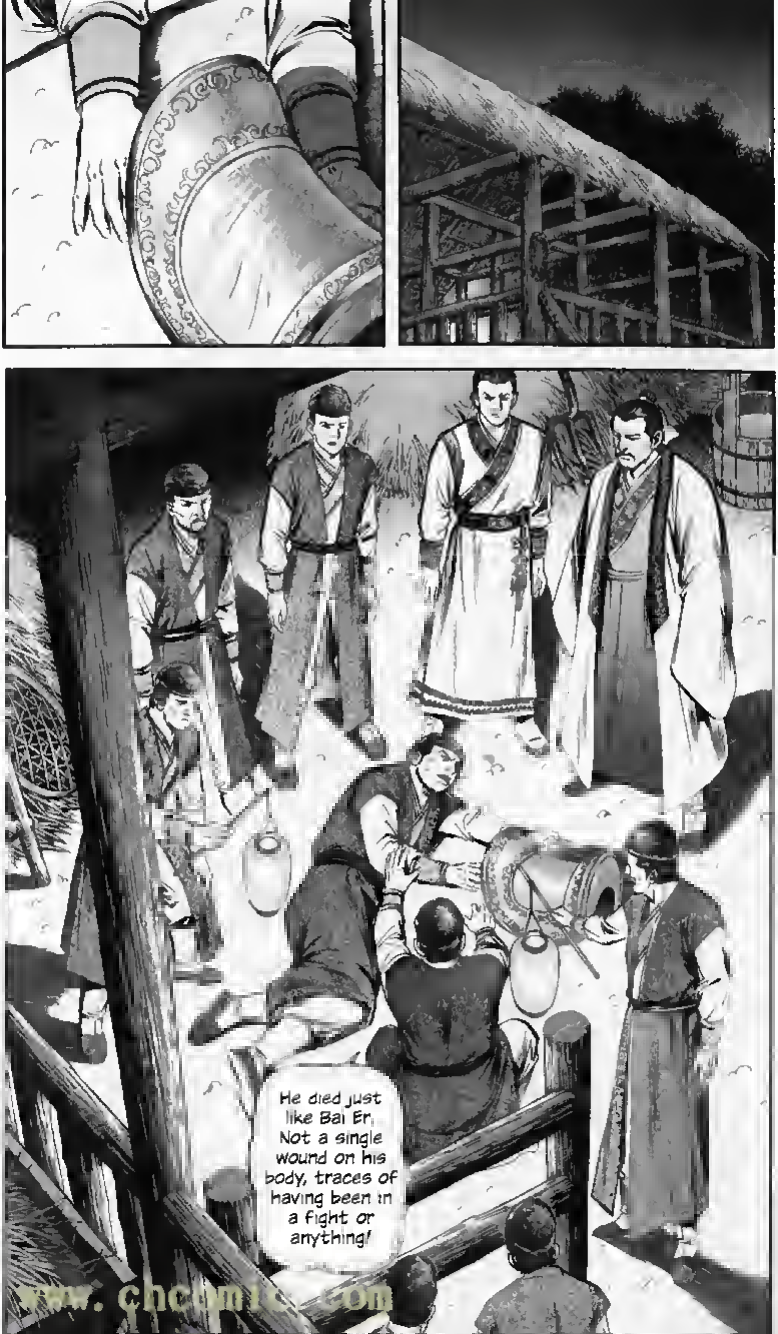

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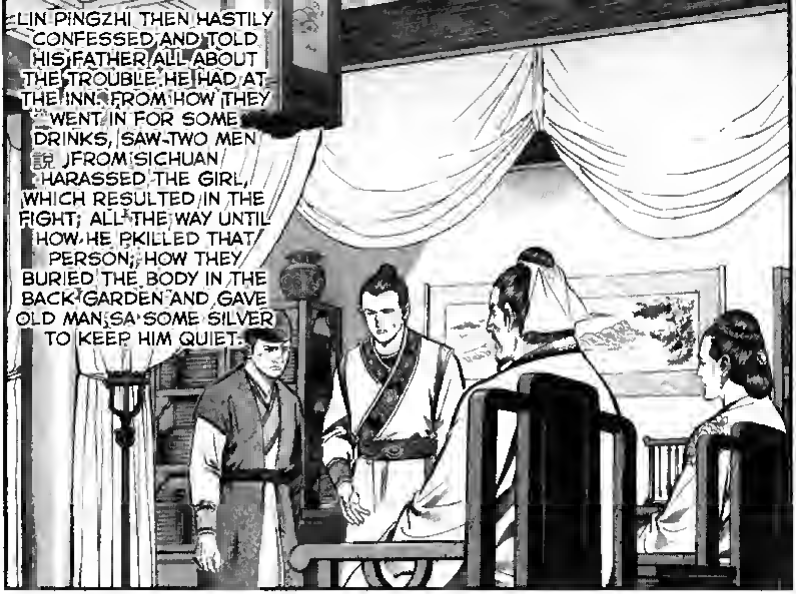
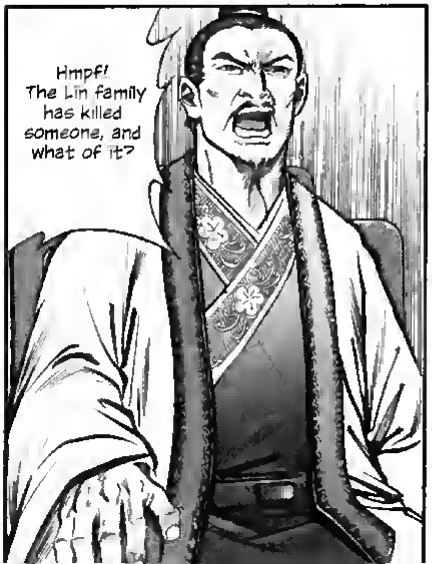
His hands are still holding onto a saddle
Looks like he was taking the saddle off before his sudden demise
How bizarre! No noticeable injury
just like the way Bai Er died...?!
Dying like that for no apparent reason...
Maybe... maybe they were cursed by some kind of demon when they...
when they went hunting with the Young Master...?
P-perhaps those two were possessed by the Sichuan ghost...!

Stop saying rubbish!
That guy's already pretty scary when he was alive, now that he's dead...
It's got to be him!
Chen Qi!
Yes.
Other than Chief Zheng and Bai Er,
who else went hunting with you? Chief Shi?
Enough
You two come with me
Chief Li
Yes, boss!
Chief Li, go and get Chief Shi


LIN PINGZHI THEN HASTILY CONFESSED AND TOLD HIS FATHER ALL ABOUT THE TROUBLE HE HAD AT THE INN. FROM HOW THEY WENT IN FOR SOME DRINKS, SAW TWO MEN FROM SICHUAN HARASSED THE GIRL, WHICH RESULTED IN THE FIGHT; ALL THE WAY UNTIL HOW HE KILLED THAT PERSON; HOW THEY BURIED THE BODY IN THE BACK GARDEN AND GAVE OLD MAN SA SOME SILVER TO KEEP HIM QUIET.

Father, it's... my entire fault. I got the family into this situation!

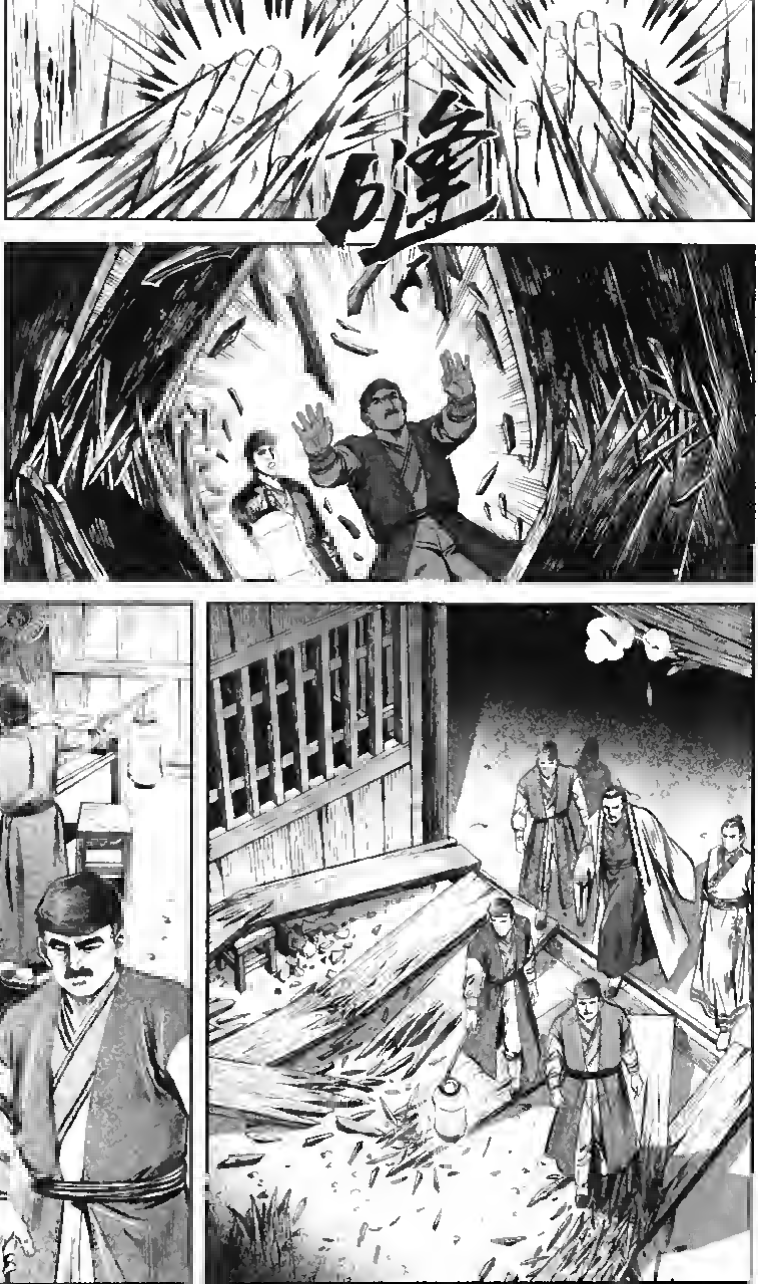

Hmpf! The Lin family has killed someone, and what of it?

Man from Sichuan, named Yu... can't be that much of coincidence, can it?
Even though Master Yu did say he's sending people over, there's no way they would have arrived so soon

Indeed.
If we ever saw a punk like him, you father would have killed him too!
Father, could those two be from Qing-cheng sect?
When you used the Whirling Heaven Palm Strike, how did he counter?
He didn't and I end up giving him another palm strike.
Flowers in the Fog
霧裡看花
What other moves did he use?
I was too infuriated at the time, and can't remember too well.
If this man can't even parry this move, it's unlikely that he's from the renowned Qing-cheng Sect.

and then he threw another kick at Bai Er
but it was instead knocked out by the guy's back kick
I recall he grabbed the young master's head so Bai Er tried to attack with a hunting fork
Those two moves resemble Qingcheng Sect's 'Shadowless Illusory Kick'!
like so.
This is getting suspicious. Let's go to that inn for a look!
Boss, I looked everywhere and couldn't find Chief Shi.
Cui, Ji, you two come along too.

嗒嗒嗒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Strange! Where are old man Sai and his granddaughter?
There's nobody around at all.
Chen Qi, Ji, you two go and dig out the corpse
Cui, follow me to keep searching
Maybe he got spooked out by the event
and left because he didn't want to be implicated.
Huh?

Father, have a look at this!
How on earth does a poor family's girl afford such a high quality silk handker-chief?
At the corner of the bed
Maybe they were leaving in a hurry and didn't notice.
Where did you find it?
Aaah !!!

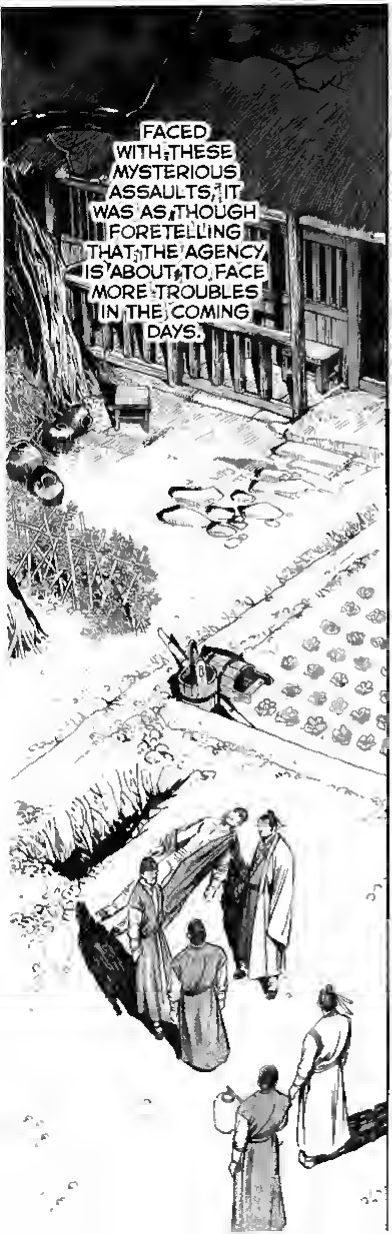
What's wrong?

It's-
it's ..!

Chief Shi!

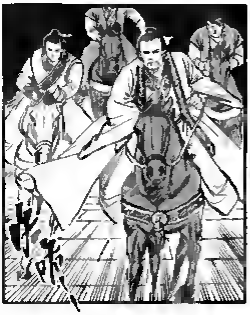
H-how is this possible...?!
The one buried there is supposed to be that Sichuan man ..!
WITH BOTH BAIER AND CHIEF ZHENG DYING IN THE SAME MANNER, FOLLOWED BY FINDING THE CORPSE OF CHIEF SHI WHILE THE BODY OF THE SICHUAN MAN IS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND, LIN ZHENNAN COULD NOT HELP BY FEEL A LITTLE RATTLED BY WHAT WAS HAPPENING.
I-I might be next...!
Even Chief Shi is dead! I-it must be the ghost of the Sichuan man!
I-it might be after me next!

Silence!
.....
Old Cai, what do you think?
That Sai old man is rather suspicious
No noticeable signs of any wounds just like the other two
Those two Sichuan man are probably their accomplices. Why else would they move the body otherwise?
Father, you said Qingcheng is sending 4 people...
and this nicely adds up...
I think their deaths are very much likely related to that old innkeeper and his granddaughter


FACED WITH THESE MYSTERIOUS ASSAULTS, IT WAS AS THOUGH FORETELLING THAT THE AGENCY IS ABOUT TO FACE MORE TROUBLES IN THE COMING DAYS.

Our agency has always shown great respect to their sect,
and has never done anything to disrespect them.

So, why would Master Yu do something like this?!



What is it?

?!

Look at this! They've taken the challenge right to our very doorsteps!
大留

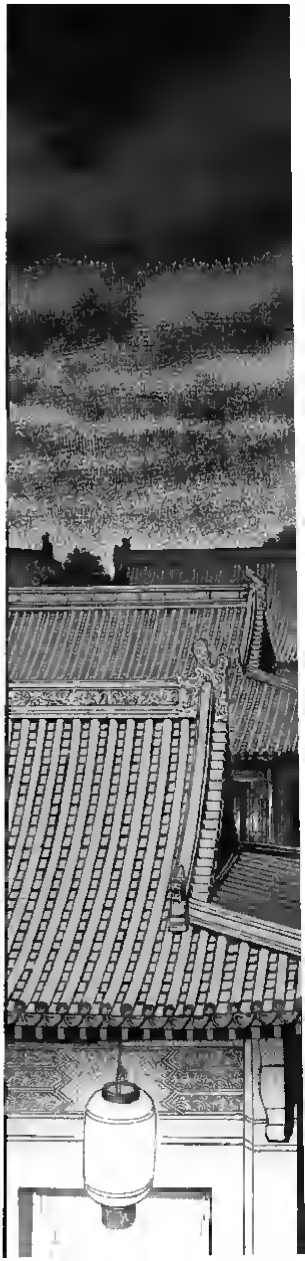
Chief Cui, summon everyone!
Hmpf! If it's a fight they want, it's a fight they'll get!
Yes, boss!
Damn those cowards! Only daring to piss around
when our boss isn't around!

Bastards from Qingcheng Sect?
How dare they?! We can't take this lying down! We should get all the people we can and head off to Sichuan!
I'll get my father and siblings to come with us!
That's right, boss! Who doesn't know about Luo Yang's Golden Sabre Clan?
After all, Madam Wang's father commands respect with his sabre skills!
We're still not sure if it's indeed Qingcheng yet
And it doesn't seem like the enemy's going to be satisfied with just picking off a few of our chiefs
So what now?

No way, I can let this be!
The banner of our agency has been held high for three generations
I won't... won't be afraid
I caused all the trouble. A true man would take full responsibility for his own actions
Hmph, they'll have to pass through me first
before they can get to you!
Why don't you move into the room outside her bedroom to guard her?
Pingzhi, your mom hasn't been well for the last couple of days. The enemy will be soon coming.
Boss, everyone's assembled and waiting!
Good!

He wasn't asking our son to guard me; he wants our son close by so we can protect him.
Ah!
"I don't need..."
I'll stay with you, mother.
I may not able to fight them off on my own.
Your father needs to take care of the agency and can't be accompanying me all the time if the enemy gets in.
That's right, Pingzhi. Mother is having joint problems these days: both my arms and legs feel weak.
The enemy is lurking in the dark while we are out here exposed under the light.
Ping-er would undoubtedly become the next target.
Ping-er may be in grave danger!

Chief Cui increase patrol of the premise
Chief Ji send people to look around, see if there are any new faces in town
We've been training for years time to put all of that into practice!
We'll make sure to drag out the culprit!
Yes!
We mustn't let the agency fall!
Right!
Yeah!



.....
My life...
give it back...!

呀！

What a terrible nightmare...

Bad news! They're dead! All of them!
It's nothing
What's wrong?

Chief
Ji!

To think that they took out all the men we sent out
All of them...!!
Lin Zhennan is man who has weathered storms to get to where he is right now, but this is the first time that he has been driven to such a situation that his hands couldn't but help to tremble and his knees to feel weak.
We sent out 20 to 30 men and it was all for naught

If I, Lin Zhennan do not avenge our comrades, then I am not fit to be called a man!

呼

You damn curs! Why are you only sneaking around in the dark? Too scared to face the Lin Family's Evil Exorcising Swordplay head on?!
Too much of a wimp to take on my Golden Sabr-!!!
啪!
呼!

一鈔

My wife!

嗖!
嗖!

No, not at all

Did you see the attacker?

Mother, are you ok?
I'm fine!

The enemy knocked off your blade with just a small piece of rock?!
Look!
We're up against some rather powerful foes here. We might not be their match
.....
Yeah!
Book-keeper Dong just sent Lin Fu to go buy some coffins
.....and right... right after he turned the corner on East Street, he fell to the ground dead!
What?
B-boss bad news!

B-boss, you might want to take a look outside.
B-but sir...
What?
Hurry and carry him back then!

……

TAKE TEN STEPS OUTSIDE THE GATES AND YOU DIE.
死者步十門出
THERE, EVERYONE STEPPED OUTSIDE TO WITNESS THE FOLLOWING MORTIFYING WORDS WRITTEN ON THE STONE SLABS IN WHAT IS UNMISTAKEABLY BLOOD.

A-and there's some words written in blood too!
B-boss, chef Hua went out the back door to head to the market but he's now dead outside the compound!
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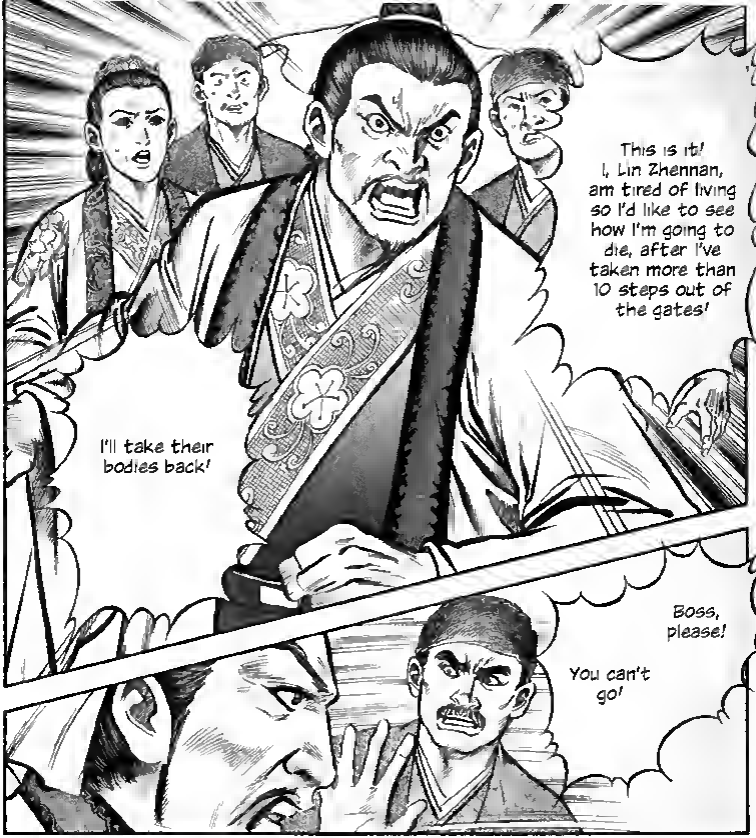
This is it! I, Lin Zhennan, am tired of living so I'd like to see how I'm going to die, after I've taken more than 10 steps out of the gates!
I'll take their bodies back!
Boss, please!
You can't go!

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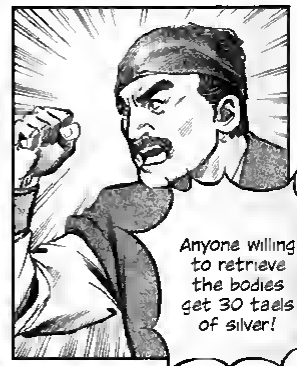
Anyone willing to retrieve the bodies get 30 taels of silver!

?!
Wait, where's Ping-er? Ping-er, where are you?!
Young master!
Young master!
Ping-er!